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TAGS: [PGOV](#) [PHUM](#) [PREL](#) [SR](#) [YI](#) [MW](#)
SUBJECT: SERBIA: EU/UNOSEK REP LEHNE VENTURES ON SLIPPING
KOSOVO TIME TABLE

Classified By: AMBASSADOR MICHAEL C. POLT PER REASONS 1.4 (B) and (D).

11. (C) Summary: Recent discussions in Belgrade with visiting EU officials attached to the UNOSEK negotiations suggest some openness in Brussels to extending the Kosovo end-game calendar well into 2007 in response to alleged reports of imminent Tadic-Kostunica agreement on a Serbian electoral timetable. Tadic has subsequently vehemently denied any such agreement in a direct conversation with the Ambassador. End Summary

12. (C) EU representative to UNOSEK Stefan Lehne gave the Ambassador a read out of his August 29 meetings with G17 Finance Minister Mladen Dinkic and DS point man in the ongoing, behind-the-scenes negotiation on a new constitution Dragor Hiber. According to Lehne, Dinkic and Hiber confirmed separately that Tadic and Kostunica will soon present a joint strategy & signed in blood⁸ that will set forth a timeline calling for the Constitution to be presented in December, a referendum for its adoption in February and parliamentary elections in May 2007. Under the agreement, Kostunica would remain PM and Tadic the President with the rest of the GOS determined by election results. Regarding the Kosovo status timeline, this joint strategy would include a diplomatic press of the Contact Group and other states to delay decision on Kosovo status until June 2007, after the proposed elections. The Ambassador spoke to President Tadic directly shortly after the Lehne readout who asserted that there was no, repeat no, truth to such an alleged agreement.

13. (C) While Lehne reported that Dinkic had told EU Enlargement Commissioner Olli Rehn that he remains committed to leaving the GOS and precipitating new elections (which he says the Radicals will win) if SAA talks are not restarted (which, if started, he says will put Serbia in better position economically and politically to deal with Kosovo and return a democratic government in elections in 2007), he observed that it would not make sense for him to leave the government early if there were a DS-DSS deal on an electoral timetable.

14. (C) Lehne said Hiber reports & enormous progress⁸ on the Constitution negotiations with the only major point of disagreement being the modality of adoption (either a referendum or a special election of a & constitutional assembly⁸ which would transition into a new Parliament). Lehne said Hiber told him Kosovo would be mentioned in the Constitution through a reference to international supervision under UNSC 1244, but did not say whether this would change if

another resolution supersedes 1244.

¶15. (C) Lehne thought that some EU capitals (and likely the Russians) might be drawn to a delay plan as a way of allowing both a resolution in Kosovo and democratic victory in Serbia. Lehne agreed this delay would be a hard sell to the Albanians, even if it came from a united CG and UNOSK. He acknowledged that ICTY cooperation would be a victim of the exercise⁸ and said he had talked to Carla Del Ponte who said her plan to report to the UNSC on September 15 was not fixed.⁸ He also acknowledged any immediate incentive to deliver Mladic would be lost.

¶16. (C) Comment: Tadic told the Ambassador most emphatically that no such deal had been agreed and that he had no idea where Dinkic had gotten this news he was receiving for the first time from the American Ambassador. A Tadic staffer later called the DCM to assure him that Lehne's people had misunderstood and that Tadic's position on elections was an old one: elections way before⁸ May 2007, and that there was no agreement from Kostunica. (We have yet to get a read-out of Tadic's discussion with Kostunica on 8/28 at which they reportedly went over the big package⁸ of political issues.) Despite this categorical denial, Lehne's reaction to Dinkic's false information unfortunately points to a potential wobbly EU response) and one that we should strongly discourage) to such a proposal. Such an approach would be a blatant attempt by the Serbs to try to divide the Contact Group. Some in Belgrad might even hope that a delay by the CG would incite Albanian violence, weakening IC resolve to grant independence. A truly bad idea that for now at least has no legs. End Comment
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